

Contributions

THE DYING PATRIARCH

B. C. MOOMAW.

In memory of my father, who died Nov. 6, in his 87th. year.

Rest thou in sleep, whose day of labor done
Fades to the twilight and the setting sun,
The night of death; yet that majestic night
Reveals the wider heavens to our sight.
Repose in perfect peace; thy well earned rest
Receive, the calm, sweet slumber of the blest.

This side the grave we mourn so good a friend,
The other side, a multitude descend
Who journeyed with him in the days gone by,
Now come to bid him welcome to the sky.
Thus who in sorrow part are those who meet,
One sweet, glad day, upon a golden street.

Sleep, while the swift night passes to the morn
When we shall be to heavenly glory born,
Thou aged saint, steadfast thru all the years;
At last triumphant over doubts and fears;
At last released from all this earthly strife;
The end eternal life! eternal life!

OUR MINISTRY: HOW INCREASE ITS NUMBERS AND EFFICIENCY

Read at the National Conference by J. L. Kimmel.

This seems to be the paramount question of the Brethren church. How to increase the numbers, and efficiency of our ministry. This one great problem, if completely solved, will, in a very few years, practically revolutionize the Brethren church. And I almost tremble, when I undertake to lay down certain rules and fixed laws, that must be complied with in order that this may be accomplished: for the very reason, that some will surely say, "Physician heal thyself."

In the first place, however, I presume it is apparent to all that we need a much greater number of ministers, and secondly the question is not, as to who has attained that standard necessary to the greatest usefulness or how can we more definitely measure the efficiency of our ministers but how can we increase our numbers as well as our usefulness.

The question is not so much perhaps a question of numbers, surely not of numbers alone, it is rather a question of power. In the sense of Holy Writ, one may chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight. Yet numbers are necessary, and the greater the number the greater the power, all things being equal. First the master alone preaching the gospel, then He sent out the twelve, then the seventy, then we read of five hundred brethren, then of thousands, and when these numbers had been multiplied again and again, the kingdoms of the world only began to fully recognize the power of the Christian religion.

The question then arises, how can we, as a church, increase the number of our ministers, so that first of all our churches may be supplied. Secondly that we may have ministers to care for the churches that are continually being established thruout the brotherhood, and thirdly to send as missionaries across the seas, that we may obey the last request and command of our blessed Master,

who said "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

The first great question that confronts us, as a church when we undertake to increase the number of our ministers, is the necessary qualifications. In the church of Christ, we cannot do as nations do, in great emergencies, draft men into service without their consent or any regard to fitness. But the gospel lays down many qualifications, and the first of these is desire. If any man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work. Then come those qualifications that relate to character and reputation as well as to the intellect. The gospel standard is a very high standard for the minister.

And yet to have an efficient ministry, these qualifications, are pre-eminently necessary. The church today says a bishop ought, or should, or might, but Paul said a bishop must have the qualifications laid down in the gospel. And inasmuch as the gospel has so much more to say about qualifications than about numbers, I shall proceed to discuss how to increase the efficiency of the ministry, and lastly how to increase its number.

For better qualifications on the part of those, who now labor, in the ministry, is equivalent to increasing its numbers.

Crysostom says, of the Apostles, "Thou they were but twelve, He made them many from that time forward, not by adding to their number, but by giving them power."

The first essential requisite therefore necessary to the usefulness of a Christian minister is, *knowledge*.

1. Knowledge of God and of his son Jesus Christ, thru the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is possible, that we may know Christ and yet not know Him, as it is necessary to know Him, to be of the greatest usefulness in His service. The apostles knew Christ for three and one half years, they sat at his feet, and received His instructions, they witnessed His miracles, and when all the lawyers and doctors of divinity, together with the sages of that day, were perplexed as to the personality of Christ, Peter as the spokesman of the apostles, cried out, "Thou art the Christ the son of the living God." Notwithstanding all this, they did not know Christ as they knew him after His resurrection and on the day of Pentecost.

Thus it is, even to this day, we may have an intellectual knowledge of Christ, and yet not that higher knowledge, that comes thru the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And altho our ideas, as a class of ministers, concerning the Holy Ghost and His influence over men may be somewhat diversified. Yet upon this one point, I think we all heartily concur; that a personal knowledge of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost, is eminently essential to the Christian ministry.

Secondly an intellectual knowledge is of the greatest importance.

The minister must reach men and women, thru the intellect.

Therefore a knowledge of God's word is

of prime importance. And the minister who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible at once becomes a power in the pulpit. Without saying one disparaging word, about the Brethren ministry, I believe more time should be devoted to the study of the Bible by the preachers themselves. And that our ministry will increase, in efficiency, as our knowledge of God's word increases.

What was it but a knowledge of God and of God's word, that distinguished Dwight L. Moody, as the greatest evangelist of the nineteenth century.

Again, a knowledge of the English language is of the greatest significance and he who does not recognize this fact, cannot hope for much success in the ministry. An utter disregard for the rules of syntax, rude and inelegant language and slang phrases will cripple the usefulness of any minister. A knowledge of the arts and sciences of history, literature, and of the languages in which the scriptures were originally written, are of great value to the minister.

Because the scriptures speak of Peter and John as unlearned men is not a conclusive argument in favor of ignorance. It must not be forgotten that on the day of Pentecost the Jews who represented every nation under heaven, were amazed and confounded and cried out, Behold are not all these which speak Galileans, and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? On this notable day called Pentecost the apostles demonstrated that they had a knowledge of languages such as no other class of men ever possessed, since the world began.

They did not have to speak here and there a word of another language, or stammer out some broken sentences but spake it as readily, properly and elegantly, as if it had been their mother tongue, for whatever was produced by a miracle, was the best of the kind. They spake not from any previous thought, or meditation but as the spirit gave them utterance. He furnishes them, with the matter as well as with the language.

They had no degrees from educational institutions, but spoke all languages and without any record of the life and teachings of Christ, wrote the gospel in classic Greek. Who today with all our boasted culture could do as much. And yet when God wanted a man to preach to the Greek philosophers, He selected a scholar, in the highest sense of that term, and from Paul to Timothy came the divine injunction, "Study to show thyself approved a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

I would not have you understand, however, that education is all that a minister needs, and when he has a college back of him, or a degree to cling to, he goes sailing without any resistance.

Traits of character are needed in the pulpit to-day more than brains or culture. The minister of the gospel should be an enthusiastic man. The pulpit requires no half hearted service. Some one has said that you can-